

have had in mind for Holmes' abode. Armed with an analysis written by Bernard Davies, a Sherlockian who grew up in the area, and a detailed 1894 map of the neighborhood, we thread through cobblestone mews and alleys to a block-long passage, Kendall Place, lined by brick buildings. Once a hodgepodge of stables and servants' quarters, the street is part of a neighborhood that is now mainly full of businesses. In the climax of the 1903 story "The Empty House," Holmes and Watson sneak through the back entrance of a deserted dwelling, whose front windows face directly onto 221B Baker Street. The description of the Empty House matches that of the old town house we're looking at. "The 'real' 221B," Johnson says decisively, "must have stood across the road." It's a rather disappointing sight: today the spot is marked by a five-story glass-and-concrete office building with a smoothie-and-sandwich take-away shop on the ground floor.

In 1989, Upper Baker and York Place having been merged into Baker Street decades earlier, a London salesman and music promoter, John Aidiniantz, bought a tumbledown Georgian boardinghouse at 239 Baker Street and converted it into the Sherlock Holmes Museum.

A fake London bobby was patrolling in front when I arrived there one weekday afternoon. After paying my £6 entry fee (about \$10), I climbed 17 stairs—the exact number mentioned in the Holmes story "A Scandal in Bohemia"—and entered a small, shabby parlor filled with Victorian and Edwardian furniture, along with props that seemed reasonably faithful to the description of the drawing room provided by Watson in "The Empty House": "The chemical corner and the acid-stained deal-topped table. . . . The diagrams, the violin case, and the pipe rack." Watson's stuffy bedroom was one flight up, crammed with medical paraphernalia and case notes; a small exhibition hall, featuring lurid dioramas from the stories and wax figurines of Sherlock Holmes and archenemy Professor Moriarty, filled the third floor. Downstairs in the gift shop, tourists were browsing through shelves of bric-a-brac: puzzles, key rings, busts of Holmes, DVDs, chess sets, deerstalker caps, meerschaum pipes, tobacco tins, porcelain statuettes and salt and pepper shakers. For a weekday afternoon, business seemed brisk.

But it has not been a universal hit. In 1990 and 1994, scholar Jean Upton published articles in the now-defunct magazine *Baker Street Miscellanea* criticizing "the shoddiness of the displays" at the museum, the rather perfunctory attention to Holmesian detail (no bearskin rug, no cigars in the coal scuttle) and the anachronistic furniture, which she compared to "the dregs of a London flea market." Upton sniffed that Aidiniantz himself possessed only superficial

Fans of the brilliant, cocaine-addicted detective can trace his footsteps, as well as those of his creator, through modern London (clockwise from top: the Old Bailey courthouse, where Conan Doyle attended a trial; St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where Holmes and Dr. Watson meet; and Rules restaurant, where Conan Doyle is believed to have dined).

